

MAPA: Gun Violence Prevention

Michigan PAs:

At the March 2023 meeting of the Michigan Academy of Physician Assistants Board of Directors, the Board supported a comprehensive approach to empower PAs and our patients to prevent gun violence. Gun violence is a high-priority public health issue. We support evidence-based solutions to reduce the risks of anyone experiencing gun violence. The following are specific areas that deserve focus from and support for Michigan PAs.

In 2022, Over 45,000 people died from gun violence in the United States. This is more than vehicle deaths and similar to the impact of Breast and Pancreatic cancers. Guns are the leading cause of death for children (18 or younger) in the United States. The U.S. experiences a similar size population facing mental illness (~17%) as other developed countries but significantly more gun violence than any other developed country. Gun violence costs \$280 billion a year in the U.S..

Gun violence is preventable. MAPA supports a public health approach to preventing gun violence. This approach includes conducting surveillance to understand causes and success rates of interventions. Identifying risk factors associated with gun violence. Developing, implementing and evaluating interventions to reduce risk factors and build resilience. Successful prevention strategies should be institutionalized within the PA practice of medicine.

Therefore, MAPA supports Michigan PAs committed to preventing gun violence through surveillance, research, education and advocacy. We support Michigan PAs discussing gun violence risks with their patients and providing education to their patients regarding gun violence prevention strategies. MAPA's Legislative Committee recommends support for evidence-based gun policy changes including but not limited to increasing access to safety devices, stronger enforcement of existing gun laws, and more effective "red flag" laws like Extreme Risk Protection Orders.

Background

Understand The Burden of Gun Violence

- Over 45,000 people die from gun violence every year in the United States. More than vehicle deaths and similar to the impact of Breast Cancer and Pancreatic Cancer.
- The U.S. experiences a similar size population with mental illness (17%) as other developed countries but significantly more gun deaths.
- Guns are the leading cause of death for children in the U.S..
- Gun Violence Costs \$280 billion a year in the U.S..

Gun Violence is Preventable

- For example, half of suicides in the United States involve firearms and the firearm suicide rate has increased by 24% in the last two decades. Access to guns can reduce the risk of child and adolescents dying by suicide.
 - When a home contains unlocked guns the odds of a child or adolescent dying by firearm suicide is more than twice as high as in households where all guns are locked.¹²
 - The risk of suicide by gun is more than twice as high in households with loaded guns, as compared to households with unloaded guns.¹¹
 - Storing ammunition together with firearms as opposed to separately also increases the risk of suicide two-fold.¹¹
- MAPA supports a public health approach to the prevention of gun violence which includes
 - (1) conducting surveillance to track gun-related deaths and injuries, gain insight into the causes of gun violence and assess the impact of interventions;
 - (2) identifying risk factors associated with gun violence (e.g., poverty and depression) and resilience or protective factors that guard against gun violence (e.g., youth access to trusted adults);
 - (3) developing, implementing and evaluating interventions to reduce risk factors and build resilience; and
 - (4) institutionalizing successful prevention strategies.

What Can We Do?

- Continued Surveillance, Research and Education
 - Surveillance

- Research
- Education
- Support Our Patients
 - Discuss Gun Violence Risks with Patients
 - Provide Education to Patients re Gun Violence Prevention
- Support Evidence-based Gun Policies
 - Examples:
 - Increase Access to Safety Devices
 - Extreme Risk Protection Orders
 - Enforce Existing Gun Laws

Resources

<https://www.rd.com/article/gun-violence-statistics/>

<https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/issue-brief/child-and-teen-firearm-mortality-in-the-u-s-and-peer-countries/>

https://www.msms.org/Portals/0/Documents/MSMS/About_MSMS/2022%20MSMS%20Policy%20Manual.pdf?ver=2022-08-08-172505-560

https://www.apha.org/-/media/Files/PDF/factsheets/200221_Gun_Violence_Fact_Sheet.ashx

<https://mea.org/senate-bill-package-proposes-significant-gun-safety-reforms/>

<https://injepijournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40621-021-00352-8>

<https://www.srcd.org/research/access-firearms-increases-child-and-adolescent-suicide>